

"America's Health Responders"

Welcome to the U.S. Public Health Service!



A publication of the Pharmacy Professional Advisory Committee

Introduction to the USPHS

The origins of the Public Health Service (PHS) can be traced to the passage of an act in 1798 that provided for the care and relief of sick and injured merchant seamen. Reorganization in 1870 converted the loose network of locally controlled hospitals into a centrally controlled Marine Hospital Service, with its headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The position of Supervising Surgeon (later Surgeon General) was created to administer the Service, and John Maynard Woodworth was appointed as the first incumbent in 1871. He moved quickly to reform the system and adopted a military model for his medical staff, instituting examinations for applicants and putting his physicians in uniforms. Woodworth created a cadre of mobile, career service physicians who could be assigned as needed to the various marine hospitals. The uniformed services component of the Marine Hospital Service was formalized as the Commissioned Corps by legislation enacted in 1889.

PHS Mission:

*"Protecting,
promoting, and
advancing the health
and safety of the
Nation."*

As we embark upon a new century, the PHS continues to fulfill its mission of "protecting, promoting, and advancing the health and safety of the Nation." It has grown from a small collection of marine hospitals to the largest and most diverse public health program in the world.

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USPHS then....and now

Useful Web Links:

- <http://www.usphs.gov>
- <http://www.hhs.gov/pharmacy/main.html>
- <http://dcp.psc.gov>



Military Benefits

There are many military benefits available to PHS Commissioned Corps officers. A brief listing of some of the more common benefits are listed below. Details of the benefits are available in the following United States Public Health Service web site in the Benefits tab: <http://www.usphs.gov>

The Base and Post Exchanges (BX/PX) – (<http://www.navy-nex.com>) A valid identification card is required to purchase merchandise and may be required for entry when not in uniform. There are several types of stores in this system including main exchanges, which are similar to department stores, auto services, uniform shops and miscellaneous stores including tailor/laundry, optical, flower, and fast food.

Commissary – Commissaries are the supermarkets at military installations. At many commissaries, a valid ID card is required for entry. Both active duty and dependents may shop at the commissary. Typically, commissaries are crowded on military paydays, the 1st and 15th of every month, and weekends. In this system, baggers work for tips only. For more information, visit: <http://www.commissaries.com>.

Health/Medical Care – Medical care is one of the most important benefits that PHS officers and their dependents will use during their careers. When using a Uniformed Services Military Treatment Facility (USMTF), it is expected that the officer be in uniform. If you are stationed close to a military hospital/clinic, you are required to use that facility. The Medical Affairs Branch (MAB) may authorize to pay for civilian medical services if an officer is not near a USMTF or if the USMTF does not provide the services needed. You may contact the MAB directly for further information on Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM EST at 1-800-368-2777, select option #2. You may also contact one of TRI-CARE Service Centers (TSC). The TSCs are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You must contact the TSC within the region in which you are located. North Region 877-874-2273, South Region 800-444-5445, West Region 888-874-9378.

TRICARE – (<http://www.tricare.osd.mil/>) The Military Health System is the primary source of health care for active-duty PHS officers. The TRICARE system has other options for active-duty family members, retirees, and their eligible family members.

Dental Care – Dental care is one of the benefits that are available to PHS officers and their dependents. Active duty officers may enroll through the USPHS or a military treatment facility. Dependents may enroll through the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP). The TDP is administered by United Concordia. For more information on dependent eligibility and enrollment, you may contact the TDP at 1-800-866-8499 or visit their website at http://www.tricare.mil/dental/TDP_Eligibility.cfm.



Experience the adventure of traveling on military aircraft!

Useful Travel Web Links:

- <http://www.afvclub.com>
- <http://www.herosalute.com/cavatx/index.html>
- <http://www.glue.umd.edu/~oard/spacea/flightinfo.html>
- <https://www.navy-lodge.com/>



Travel Opportunities

Service Clubs – The most frequently used club is the Officers' Club at military bases. You are also eligible to visit United Service Organization (USO) locations. USO is a charitable corporation providing morale, welfare, and recreation services to uniformed military personnel. Many have "officer clubs" in airports that provide free services to officers on work related or personal travel (<http://www.uso.org>).

Air Mobility Command (AMC) Flights – This is the ability to travel on military flights on space available (Space-A) basis. These flights are typically extremely inexpensive (\$15-30 each way, both domestically and abroad), and usually fly in and out of military bases. Officers must be on official leave to be eligible for a space on the flight. Information on Space-A travel can be found online or at commissaries/uniform stores on base. Many flights to Europe leave from the Washington, D.C. metro area. For more information, visit: <http://www.glue.umd.edu/~oard/spacea/flightinfo.html>.



Rüdesheim, Germany
Near Ramstein Air Base

Discounts - Many hotels, car rental companies, and airlines offer discounted rates to members of the Uniformed Services and their families while traveling with or without orders and are often referred to as the current "Military" or "Government" rates.

Armed Forces Vacation Club (AFVC) - AFVC is a "Space Available" program that offers excess condominium time-shares at resorts around the world for only \$299.00 per unit, per week. All Uniformed Services members and their adult dependents are eligible to use this program. For more information, visit their website at <http://afvclub.com/search.asp>

Lodging Facilities – Almost all military installations have some form of temporary lodging on base, which is available as space allows and extremely inexpensive. Bachelor Officers' Quarters (BOQ) and Visiting Officers' Quarters (VOQ) vary widely ranging from simple rooms with shared bath to multi-room suites. Temporary military lodging (TML) quarters are designed for the military family. Some useful numbers to identify these facilities are:

Air Force 1-888-AFLODGE (1-888-235-6343)

Army 1-800-GO-ARMY-1 (1-800-462-7691)

Marine Corps <http://www.usmc-mccs.org/busops/Lodging/tlf.asp>

Navy 1-800-NAVY-INN (628-9466)

Coast Guard <http://www.uscg.mil/mwr/Cottages/RecreationCottages.htm>

Recreational Facilities – Most military installations have a variety of recreational facilities available. These include theaters, swimming pools, bowling lanes, sports equipment rentals, youth centers, and information/ticket offices. Several installations also have wilderness camps, waterfront sites, and other vacation-type sites. Check your closest base's website for details.

Reduced-price tickets may be obtained at most military installations through the Moral, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) office for local attractions, movies and many well-known theme parks (i.e. Disney World, Sea World, Universal Studios).

**Don't miss out on
discounts!**

Moving Information

Are you getting ready to move? When accepting your first assignment or when accepting a new assignment later, you may have a geographic permanent change of station (PCS) move. There are many great resources to help you get moved and settled in. PCS America is a relocation network guide of military installations all over the world for the active as well as the reserve community. The website address is <http://www.pcsamerica.net>, and is a great resource guide for transitioning to a new area with such helpful tips as lodging, schools and even weather. Another resource that provides worldwide service is a commercial realtor such as Remax. You can go to their website at <http://www.remax.com> for more information. If you are moving to the Washington, DC Metropolitan area, the main housing assistance office is 1-800-210-0139, and their website is <http://www.ndw.navy.mil>.

Your agency may be paying for your move, and so you may collaborate with them to ship your household goods to your new duty station. For information concerning the shipment of household goods, contact your Agency Liaison. You will need to download and complete form PHS-40131-1, which can be found at http://dcp.psc.gov/PDF_docs/4013_1.pdf. Be sure to check with your duty organization to determine if relocation expenses will be paid.



Military Courtesy

Commissioned Officers of the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) are required to render proper military courtesy under USPHS Personnel Instruction 2, Subchapter CC26.1, "Uniformed Services Courtesies." Uniformed services courtesies are extension of common customs of courtesy in civilian life. When in uniform, and serving with uniformed service personnel of other federal agencies, or when visiting a military installation, USPHS Officers are required to conform to the rules of courtesy as practiced by that service. Except for saluting, the rules of military courtesy should also be observed when out of uniform.

Commissioned officers are vested with a legal office and carry that office with them. Commissioned officers are appointed by, or under the authority of, the President with confirmation by the U.S. Senate, and serve indefinitely at the pleasure of the President. Consequently, a "commissioned" officer is a direct representative of the President, and as such, can give verbal or written orders to subordinates which have the force of federal law. Given this status and responsibility, a commissioned officer, especially in uniform, must be ever wary of his/her actions and comments when in public, and should act with proper decorum at all times. Military courtesy is a required standard of behavior among all U.S. commissioned officers and uniformed military personnel. Service members should ensure that proper military courtesy is rendered to members of all U.S. uniformed services, and to uniformed military personnel of U.S. allied nations. For detailed information on military courtesy and on-base etiquette, please go to: http://dcp.psc.gov/eccis/documents/CCPM26_1_2.pdf



Bonuses and Special Pays

The most up-to-date source of information regarding bonuses and special pays for all officers is through the Electronic Commissioned Corps Issuance System (eCCIS). This web site may be accessed via <http://dcp.psc.gov/eccis/>. As a pharmacy officer in the USPHS, you are eligible for bonuses and special pays. Special pays for pharmacy officers include **Variable Special Pay (VSP)** and **Board Certified Pay (BCP)**. The **VSP** is a monthly pay that is available to all pharmacy officers based on years of creditable service. The creditable service entry date (CSED) is determined by two concurrent factors. It reflects the years spent practicing after graduating with a qualifying first professional degree in pharmacy while serving in a Uniformed Service. The CSED date can be located on each officer's appointment and call to active duty orders. For instance, an officer that served in the Navy for ten years in various roles, but only served three of those years as a pharmacy officer would have a CSED date reflective of those three years of concurrent Uniformed Service while serving as a pharmacist. Currently, the annual VSP rates for pharmacy officers in the pay grades O-1 through O-6 are:

In pharmacy internship training:	\$3,000
Less than 3 years	\$3,000
At least 3 but less than 8 years	\$7,000
At least 8 but less than 12 years	\$12,000
At least 12 but less than 14 years	\$10,000
At least 14 but less than 18 years	\$9,000
18 or more years	\$8,000

Pharmacy officers serving in pay grades above O-6 are not eligible for VSP. Pharmacists receive these annual payments disbursed monthly with other pays.

Board Certified Pay (BCP)

Pharmacists are also eligible for non-physician board certification special pay (NPBCP). For the purposes of pay, there are currently five boards recognized by the USPHS. The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) sponsored board, administered by the American Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties recognizes the following specialty certifications:

1. Nuclear Pharmacy (BCNP)
2. Pharmacotherapy (BCPS)
3. Nutrition Support Pharmacy Practice (BCNSP)
4. Oncology Pharmacy (BCOP)
5. Psychiatric Pharmacy (BCPP)

Non-physician board certification special pay rates for pharmacists are based on the CSED date. Those pharmacists possessing certifications in more than one specialty are only eligible for one BCP. Currently, the annual NPBCP rates for pharmacy officers are:

Less than 10 years:	\$2,000
At least 10 but less than 12 years	\$2,500
At least 12 but less than 14 years	\$3,000
At least 14 but less than 18 years	\$4,000
At least 18 years	\$5,000

These annual payments are disbursed monthly with other pays.

Eligible pharmacists must proactively provide documentation in support of their certification.

Upon initial call to active duty or a change in certification status, the USPHS Compensation Branch should be contacted by calling 301-594-2963.

Accession Bonus

Currently, the USPHS is offering an AB of \$30,000 in exchange for a commitment to remain on active duty as a PHS pharmacist for a period of not less than four years. There are limitations on eligibility requirements and consequences for not fulfilling the contract. The details of this program are further described in the eCCIS by visiting <http://dcp.psc.gov/eccis/>.

The latest information on special pays is available using the following hyperlink: http://dcp.psc.gov/eccis/documents/CCPM22_2_8.pdf.

Other Benefits

Servicemember's Group Life Insurance (SGLI) -

This is a program of low cost group life insurance for servicemembers on active duty, ready reservists, members of the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Public Health Service, cadets and midshipmen of the four service academies, and members of the Reserve Officer Training Corps. Servicemembers with SGLI coverage have two options available to them upon release from service. They can convert their full-time SGLI coverage to term insurance under the Veterans' Group Life Insurance program or convert to a permanent plan of insurance with one of the participating commercial insurance companies. <http://www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/SGLI/SGLI.htm>

The Navy Mutual Aid Association's (NMAA) Insurance Program

The Navy Mutual Aid Association offers excellent rates on life insurance. This is a competitive and cheaper option than (SGLI). For example, this year, SGLI lowered its rates to become competitive with NMAA's rates. NMAA responded by cutting their low rates even lower. Also, it's important to remember that SGLI benefits end when an officer separates from service. That is not the case with NMAA.

Coverage	SGLI Premium	NMAA Premium
\$150,000	\$10.50	\$9.00
\$250,000	\$17.50	\$13.00
\$400,000	\$28.00	\$19.00
\$800,000	n/a	\$27.00

Note: You can carry both SGLI and NMAA policies. NMAA also allows riders for spouses and children that are competitive. For example, a \$100,000 rider for a spouse would cost \$4.00 a month. NMAA also generates small annual refunds. For information concerning NMAA's Career Assistance Loan Program for newly commissioned officers request an application packet at cap@navymutual.org.

You can compare the two life insurance options, go to <http://navymutual.org/products/index.html>. You can review the SGLI life insurance plan by going to <http://dcp.psc.gov>, clicking on "Payroll Issues" then SGLI Family Coverage Information. You have to make this decision early-while you are filling out your initial paperwork, so decide fast!!

GI Bill/Educational benefits - Upon commissioning, you may select a one year \$100 a month withdrawal from your paycheck to qualify for the GI Bill for education benefits. Depending on whether you sign up for a 2 year or 3 year commitment before using your benefits, you can receive up to \$1,000 a month for educational benefits. To see the benefits rates for a three-year or more commitment versus a two-year commitment, go to <http://www.gibill.va.gov/education/rates/ch30rates100104.htm>.

You can only opt for the GI Bill once - when you are filling out your initial paperwork! Many people regret not signing up, so think about it carefully before declining. <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>

Other Benefits (continued)

Soldier's and Sailor's Civil Relief Act (SSCRA) - In 1940, Congress passed the SSCRA to provide protections for uniformed service members. The PHS has been covered by the SSCRA since 22 April 1976. The Servicemember's Civil Relief Act (SCRA) signed into law by President Bush on 19 December 2003 expanded and improved the SSCRA. Some key provisions of the Act are listed in this section. If you are on active duty, the SCRA guarantees that your state residency will not change just because of your military orders – even if you buy a house in the state of your new duty station, register your car there, or obtain a new state driver's license. This means that you will continue to pay state taxes **ONLY** to your home state, **UNLESS** you change state residency voluntarily. The primary means of changing state residency voluntarily is by voting in a new state or changing tax withholding to a new state.



United Services Automobile Association (USAA) – The USAA is a financial institution created specifically to serve uniformed service members and their families. They offer competitive rates for car insurance, homeowner's and renter's insurance, and mortgage loans. You may also invest through the USAA and open 'no-cost' checking and savings accounts through them. An attractive loan option for many junior officers (especially first-time buyers) is the VA loan, which is a type of mortgage option through the USAA (exclusive to uniformed service officers and their families). There is no private mortgage insurance (PMI) required or down payment (for loans < \$240,000). In addition, closing costs are generally lower than some mortgage plans (however, the loan amount is limited to under \$300,000). You have to become a member first to access their website, purchase insurance,

acquire a home loan. Contact information for one of USAA's many services include:

Banking services (investing, checking, savings)

Insurance, & Mortgage Services

Visit: <http://www.usaa.com>

Saving for Retirement

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

The Thrift Savings Plan is a tax-deferred savings plan, meaning it is taken from your salary before it is taxed (which lowers your taxable income) and taxes are paid upon withdrawal of the money out of the account. There is a TSP for civilian as well as uniformed service officers, but the plans are very different. The civilian account is more like a 401K, where

a percentage of contributions are matched by the employing agency. In the uniformed services account, the contributions are not matched, but they are tax deferred. This is not the sole retirement option for officers. The uniformed services also offer a military retirement plan, which provides a method of adding to the 'nest egg' that a person builds over their career. Also, you can borrow from your TSP account under certain conditions. To find out more about how to sign up and to get more information, visit the TSP website at <http://www.tsp.gov/>.



Training, Readiness, and Deployment

In order to be promoted, you must meet readiness standards for deployment as defined by the Office of Force Readiness and Deployment (OFRD) Manual Circular 377 (links below). Deployment generally consists of a two week tour in response to a federal disaster. Typically, deployments have been in response to hurricanes and other natural disasters. Examples of deployments can be found on the OFRD website at <http://ccrf.hhs.gov/ccrf/>. There are also numbers of excellent emergency/disaster response courses offered by the OFRD, some of which may be free for your agency (link below). It is highly encouraged that you continue to acquire new knowledge that will make you even more valuable to the Corps. The last link below is for the Commissioned Officers Training Academy (COTA), which offers an introductory “Basic Officer Training Course (BOTC)” designed specifically for PHS officers and a follow-on “Independent Officer Training Course” (IOTC) with more in depth modules.

If you successfully complete both the BOTC and IOTC (and we highly encourage you to), you will earn the PHS Training ribbon!

Current Commissioned Corps Readiness Standards – Information on readiness standards can be found on the Commissioned Corps Management Information System (CCMIS) website at http://dcp.psc.gov/PDF_docs/Man_circ_377.pdf. Please also access the following link for an extension to Manual Circular 377: http://dcp.psc.gov/eccis/documents/PPM07_001.pdf.

Office of Force Readiness and Deployment (OFRD) – The OFRD website maybe accessed at <http://oep.osophs.dhhs.gov/ccrf/>. There are a number of excellent training courses (many free to the officer and his/her agency) at the following website: <http://oep.osophs.dhhs.gov/ccrf/training.htm>.



Commissioned Officers Training Academy (COTA) – The BOTC is not currently required for commissioned officers; in the future, it may be required before commissioning and reporting for duty. The goal of the BOTC is to familiarize PHS officers with the USPHS Commissioned Corps history and mission, proper uniform wear, military customs and courtesies, benefits, etc. Additional information can be found on the following website: <http://dcp.psc.gov/Training.asp>.

Legal Services Benefits – PHS officers are entitled to certain legal benefits like the creation of “Simple Wills” and “Powers of Attorney.” These services are provided by the legal staff of the Judge Advocate General’s (JAG) office.



Tax Benefits – For more information see the Servicemember's Civil Relief Act (SCRA) at <http://www.military.com/Resources/ResourcesContent/0,13964,31042,00.html>.